



# News Release

STATE OF MARYLAND

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Martin O'Malley  
Governor

Anthony G. Brown  
Lt. Governor

Gary D. Maynard  
Secretary

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Rick Binetti 410-339-5007

Mark Vernarelli 410 339-5065

## **Eight Correctional Officers From North Branch Face Possible Termination As Excessive Force Probe Widens To Include Cumberland-Area Prison**

TOWSON, MD (March 27, 2008)---Eight correctional officers from North Branch Correctional Institution near Cumberland have been placed on administrative leave due to allegations of excessive force. The eight face punishment up to and including termination; meetings are now underway with Division of Correction (DOC) personnel administrators.

This action has been taken in the wake of incidents that allegedly occurred shortly after the arrival of a group of inmates who had been transferred from Roxbury Correctional Institution following a disturbance there on March 6. Investigators are probing whether excessive force was used against those inmates upon their arrival at North Branch.

Eight Roxbury officers have already been recommended for termination, and one was suspended for 15 days without pay, in connection to alleged excessive force against an inmate that occurred at Roxbury during the weekend of March 8. This is a separate incident as far as the Department knows at this time, and the inmate involved is not known to be connected to those involved in the North Branch investigation.

In addition to the administrative probe by DOC, the Internal Investigative Unit of the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) and the Maryland State Police have undertaken a criminal investigation. Maryland State Police is the lead agency in that probe.

Due to the ongoing investigation, DPSCS cannot comment on specific allegations or any further details at this time. However, Commissioner of Correction J. Michael Stouffer says, "Just as we will not tolerate violence against our staff, we cannot tolerate excessive force perpetrated by our staff. Each allegation will be thoroughly and aggressively pursued in partnership with State Police and the State's Attorney's office."

###

